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Message Text

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PAGE 01 PONTA 00021 242126Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
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R 241745Z JAN 77
FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1600
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMCONSUL OPORTO
USMISSION NATO
COMUSFORAZ
USCINCEUR
CINCLANT
DIA WASHDC
USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EAIR, PO
SUBJ: AZOREAN DEVELOPMENTS: REGIONAL GOVERNMENT POSITION ON
GASOLINE PRICES AND CIVIL AVIATION

REF: A. LISBON 619 (DTG 211741Z JAN 77) (NOTAL)
B. PONTA DELGADA 019 (DTG 211900Z JAN 77) (NOTAL)

1. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IN ITS REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 21, CONFIRMED ITS PREVIOUS DECISION NOT TO PERMIT PRICES OF GASOLINE TO INCREASE IN THE REGION "UNTIL COMPLETE CLARIFICATION OF THE MATTER". ACCORDING TO THE REGIONAL FINANCE SECRETARY, THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS NOT CONSULTED BEFORE HAND BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AS THE CONSTITUTION REQUIRES. ONCE LISBON CONSULTS WITH THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, THE LATTER WILL PERMIT THE PRICE INCREASE IN THE
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PAGE 02 PONTA 00021 242126Z

AZORES. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THE ECONOMIC NECESSITY FOR THE PRICE HIKE, BUT GIVES OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT IT MUST BE HEARD ON ALL RPT ALL SUBJECTS WHICH AFFECT THE REGION. REGIONAL PRESIDENT, MOTA AMARAL ISSUED A STRONG STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE JANUARY 20 DEMONSTRATION AT THE RESIDENCE OF THE MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

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2. DURING THE JANUARY 21 MEETING, THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ALSO TOOK A STRONG STAND ON CIVIL AVIATION. IN A COMMUNIQUE, IT COMPLAINED OF THE SERVICE TAP OFFERS THE AZORES AND SAID IF TAP WAS NOT PREPARED TO GUARANTEE PROPER SERVICES TO THE REGION, THEN IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO END TAP'S MONOPOLY ON BOTH THE LISBON-AZORES AND LAJES-US ROUTES. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE USE OF LAJES AND WANTS TO INCREASE RPT INCREASE THE NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS TO THAT AIRPORT. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ALSO NOTED THAT THE QUESTION OF THE CIVIL USE OF LAJES IS ONE WHICH IT HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED IT INTENDS TO RAISE IN THE LAJES BASE NEGOTIATIONS.

3. COMMENT: THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS NO SPECIFIC AUTHORITY IN THE FIELD OF CIVIL AVIATION, BUT THE ISLANDS' DEPENDENCE ON TRANSPORTATION LINKS GIVE THIS ISSUE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE HERE. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS THE RIGHT TO BE CONSULTED BY LISBON ON ANY SUBJECT WHICH AFFECTS THE REGION AND IT IS INTERPRETING THIS RIGHT IN A BROAD SENSE.
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